

was ever known to return to the land of cakes not plum—but oats.

As Davy's greatest discovery was Faraday, so it may be said that Playfair's was Dewar, who acted for some time as his assistant. The five months' duties of the Edinburgh chair did not by any means exhaust his energies. On the occasion of the second great exhibition of 1862, his services were again called for, and in 1868 he was returned to Parliament in the Liberal interest as representing the Universities of Edinburgh and St. Andrews, a seat which he held for seventeen years. His Parliamentary labours were arduous and important, and his name will go down as representing the reorganisation of the Civil Service. He also presided over many important Committees and Royal Commissions; indeed, it may be said that for many years no official inquiry was considered satisfactory without the advice of Playfair, whose clear head and common sense were always readily placed at the service of the nation. He was Postmaster-General in Gladstone's ministry of 1873, and on the return of the Liberals to power in 1880 he was elected Chairman of Ways and Means, a post which in those stormy days was no sinecure. At the election of 1885, finding his Liberal views did not coincide with those of the University constituencies, he offered himself as a candidate for South Leeds, and was returned also in 1886 and 1892. He was Vice-President of the Council during Mr. Gladstone's short administration of 1886, but was not offered office in 1892, but received the honour of a peerage, which was given him more for his political than his scientific eminence. Playfair was the last remaining original member of the Chemical Society. The banquet which was to have been given in his honour and in that of the other past presidents of fifty years' standing has had to be postponed owing to his somewhat sudden death.

It is to him that we owe the first movement with regard to technical instruction, and his name will go down to posterity as one "who loved his fellow men."

He was laid to rest at St. Andrews, the city from which his family sprang. His merit was recognised by representatives of the Queen and of the Prince of Wales, and numerous friends and admirers, both scientific and political, as well as by the citizens of St. Andrews.

H. E. R.

OSBERT SALVIN, F.R.S.

ORNITHOLOGY and entomology have sustained a great loss by the death of Mr. Osbert Salvin, which occurred on the 1st inst. at his beautiful residence Hawksfold, near Haslemere. The second and only surviving son of the late Mr. Anthony Salvin, the well-known architect, he was born in 1835, and received his education at Westminster and Trinity Hall, Cambridge, where he graduated as a Senior Optime in the Natural Science Tripos of 1857. Immediately after taking his degree he, together with Mr. W. H. Hudleston (then Simpson), joined Mr. (now Canon) Tristram in his natural history exploration of Tunis and Eastern Algeria, where they passed five months. In the autumn of the same year Mr. Salvin proceeded to Guatemala, where, chiefly in company with the late Mr. G. U. Skinner, the celebrated collector of orchids, he stayed till the middle of 1858, returning to Central America (henceforth always to be associated with his name) about twelve months later. He again went out in 1861, accompanied by Mr. Frederick Godman, and continued the explorations he had already begun, but was home again in 1863. In 1865 he married Caroline, the daughter of W. W. Maitland, Esq., of Loughton in Essex, and with her subsequently undertook another voyage to Central America. In 1874, on the foundation of the Strickland Curatorship in the University of Cambridge, he accepted that office, which he filled until 1883, when, on his father's death,

he succeeded to the property at Hawksfold, and removed thither, though there was scarcely a week in which he did not pass some days in London; for with Mr. Godman he had conceived the idea of bringing out a "Biologia Centrali Americana," being a complete natural history of the countries lying between Mexico and the Isthmus of Panama. This gigantic task, by far the greatest work of the kind ever attempted, taxed all their united efforts, and those of the many contributors they enlisted, and is still in progress. Before beginning this, Mr. Salvin had edited the third series of the *Ibis*, of which he was one of the founders, and had brought out a "Catalogue of the Strickland Collection" in the Cambridge Museum. He contributed also the *Trochilidae* (Humming-birds) and *Procellariidae* (Petrels)—on which he was the acknowledged authority—to the British Museum "Catalogue of Birds," and almost his latest labour was that of completing and arranging the late Lord Lilford's "Coloured Figures of British Birds"; while the Royal Society's "Catalogue of Scientific Papers" enumerates forty-seven published by Mr. Salvin alone, twenty-three by him and Mr. Godman jointly, and fifty-four by him and Mr. Sclater—all before 1884.

Mr. Salvin was a Fellow of the Royal, Linnean, Zoological and Entomological Societies, on the Councils of each of which he frequently served; and it may be truly said that there were few naturalists whose opinion was more often sought, for his advice was generally sound. His figure was well known at the Athenæum Club, and last year he was elected an Honorary Fellow of his old College. He will be greatly missed by a large circle of friends, to whom his quiet and unassuming manners greatly endeared him.

N.

NOTES.

THE freedom of the city of Edinburgh is to be conferred on Lord Lister on June 15.

THE annual ladies' conversazione of the Royal Society was held yesterday, as we went to press.

THE Prince of Wales will open the new buildings of the University Extension College, Reading, on Saturday next, June 11.

A FLORAL fête and children's floral parade will be held in the gardens of the Royal Botanic Society, Regent's Park, from 2 to 7 o'clock to-morrow (Friday).

THE city of Como, the birthplace of Alexander Volta, is preparing to worthily celebrate in 1899 the hundredth anniversary of the invention of the Voltaic or Electric Pile. To commemorate this important event, which has led to some of the greatest discoveries of the present century, there will be held at Como, from May 15 to October 15, an International Electrical Exhibition, to which will be annexed a national exhibition of the manufacture of silk—a branch of trade much developed in Como—and an international exhibition of the machinery, preparation, and process of working the same. Italian and foreign electricians are invited to a Congress, which will be held for the purpose of discussing the progress and applications of electricity. Como is a flourishing city on the main line of St. Gothard, and forty kilometres from Milan. It is pleasantly situated at the foot of the Rhaetian Alps, and on the shores of the most beautiful lake of Lombardy, to which it gives its name. An electrical exhibition ought to succeed in Italy, where the abundant hydraulic power greatly facilitates electric works. The application of electricity to the manufacture of silk must be of interest in Como, where the silk-works are of ancient date, and rapid progress is being made, though the industry is indebted to foreign countries for the machinery and implements. We are informed that foreign inventions will be greatly valued at the